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chooses to pay more for the care provided at a facility which exceeds VA standards.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[54 FR 20842, May 15, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 22754, May 26, 1989. Redesignated at 61 FR 21965, May 13, 1996, as amended at 61 FR 63720, Dec. 2, 1996; 69 FR 18803, Apr. 9, 2004; 74 FR 63308, Dec. 3, 2009; 76 FR 10248, Feb. 24, 2011]

§ 17.64 [Reserved]

§ 17.65 Approvals and provisional approvals of community residential care facilities.

(a) An approval of a facility meeting all of the standards in 38 CFR 17.63 based on the report of a VA inspection and any findings of necessary interim monitoring of the facility shall be for a 12-month period.

(b) The approving official, based on the report of a VA inspection and on any findings of necessary interim monitoring of the facility, may provide a community residential care facility with a provisional approval if that facility does not meet one or more of the standards in 38 CFR 17.63, provided that the deficiencies do not jeopardize the health or safety of the residents, and that the facility management and VA agree to a plan of correcting the deficiencies in a specified amount of time. A provisional approval shall not be for more than 12 months and shall not be for more time than VA determines is reasonable for correcting the specific deficiencies.

(c) An approval may be changed to a provisional approval or terminated under the provisions of §§ 17.66 through 17.71 because of a subsequent failure to meet the standards of § 17.63 and a provisional approval may be terminated under the provisions of §§ 17.66 through 17.71 based on failure to meet the plan of correction or failure otherwise to meet the standards of § 17.63.

(d)(1) VA may waive one or more of the standards in 38 CFR 17.63 for the approval of a particular community residential care facility, provided that a VA safety expert certifies that the deficiency does not endanger the life or safety of the residents; the deficiency cannot be corrected as provided in paragraph (b) of this section for provi-

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sional approval of the community residential care facility; and granting the waiver is in the best interests of the veteran in the facility and VA's community residential care program. In order to reach the above determinations, the VA safety expert may request supporting documentation from the community residential care facility.

(2) In those instances where a waiver is granted, the subject standard is deemed to have been met for purposes of approval of the community residential care facility under paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section. The waiver and date of issuance will be noted on each annual survey of the facility as long as the waiver remains valid and in place.

(3) A waiver issued under this section remains valid so long as the community residential care facility operates continuously under this program without a break. VA may, on the recommendation of an approving official, rescind a waiver issued under this section if a VA inspector determines that there has been a change in circumstances and that the deficiency can now be corrected, or a VA safety expert finds that the deficiency jeopardizes the health and safety of residents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[74 FR 63308, Dec. 3, 2009, as amended at 78 FR 32126, May 29, 2013]

§ 17.66 Notice of noncompliance with VA standards.

If the hearing official determines that an approved community residential care facility does not comply with the standards set forth in § 17.63 of this part, the hearing official shall notify the community residential care facility in writing of:

(a) The standards which have not been met;

(b) The date by which the standards must be met in order to avoid revocation of VA approval;

(c) The community residential care facility's opportunity to request an oral or paper hearing under § 17.67 of this part before VA approval is revoked; and

(d) The date by which the hearing official must receive the community residential care facility's request for a hearing, which shall not be less than 10

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calendar days and not more than 20 calendar days after the date of VA notice of noncompliance, unless the hearing official determines that noncompliance with the standards threatens the lives of community residential care residents in which case the hearing official must receive the community residential care facility's request for an oral or paper hearing within 36 hours of receipt of VA notice.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[54 FR 20842, May 15, 1989. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 21965, 21967, May 13, 1996; 78 FR 32126, May 29, 2013]

§ 17.67 Request for a hearing.

The community residential care facility operator must specify in writing whether an oral or paper hearing is requested. The request for the hearing must be sent to the hearing official. Timely receipt of a request for a hearing will stay the revocation of VA approval until the hearing official issues a written decision on the community residential care facility's compliance with VA standards. The hearing official may accept a request for a hearing received after the time limit, if the community residential care facility shows that the failure of the request to be received by the hearing official's office by the required date was due to circumstances beyond its control.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[54 FR 20842, May 15, 1989. Redesignated at 61 FR 21965, May 13, 1996]

§ 17.68 Notice and conduct of hearing.

(a) Upon receipt of a request for an oral hearing, the hearing official shall:

(1) Notify the community residential care facility operator of the date, time, and location for the hearing; and

(2) Notify the community residential care facility operator that written statements and other evidence for the record may be submitted to the hearing official before the date of the hearing. An oral hearing shall be informal. The rules of evidence shall not be followed. Witnesses shall testify under oath or affirmation. A recording or transcript of every oral hearing shall be made. The hearing official may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious testimony.

(b) Upon the receipt of a community residential care facility's request for a paper hearing, the hearing official shall notify the community residential care facility operator that written statements and other evidence must be submitted to the hearing official by a specified date in order to be considered as part of the record.

(c) In all hearings, the community residential care facility operator and VA may be represented by counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[54 FR 20842, May 15, 1989. Redesignated at 61 FR 21965, May 13, 1996]

§ 17.69 Waiver of opportunity for hearing.

If representatives of a community residential care facility which receive a notice of noncompliance under § 17.66 of this part fail to appear at an oral hearing of which they have been notified or fail to submit written statements for a paper hearing in accordance with § 17.68 of this part, unless the hearing official determines that their failure was due to circumstances beyond their control, the hearing official shall:

(a) Consider the representatives of the community residential care facility to have waived their opportunity for a hearing; and,

(b) Revoke VA approval of the community residential care facility and notify the community residential care facility of this revocation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

[54 FR 20842, May 15, 1989. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 21965, 21967, May 13, 1996]

§ 17.70 Written decision following a hearing.

(a) The hearing official shall issue a written decision within 20 days of the completion of the hearing. An oral hearing shall be considered completed when the hearing ceases to receive in person testimony. A paper hearing shall be considered complete on the date by which written statements must be submitted to the hearing official in order to be considered as part of the record.

(b) The hearing official's determination of a community residential care facility's noncompliance with VA